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[June 9, 1928]

✓
MOTHER'S DAY.

A Comedy in One Act.

by

Mrs Ivar Levinsohn. ✓

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12 Pinchurst Ave.

New York City.

Characters:

Mike Foley.

Mrs Foley.

Elisabeth Foley. Their daughter, age about thirty. Single

Margy Robertson. Their daughter, age about twenty one.

Scene: Dining room of the Foley flat on Washington Heights.
The furniture consists of a buffet, a small sewing table, a round dining room table and a few chairs. The furniture is cheap but modern. A door leading to kitchen, another door leading to hall. Two windows facing street. The room neatly arranged and very clean.

As curtain rises Mrs Foley enters with bottle of medicine and tea spoon. She goes over to her husband, who is seated in an arm chair, his bandaged foot resting on a foot stool.

Mrs F Mike, Mike, Ye're half an hour past yer time fer yer medicine. (He opens his eyes a little, sees the bottle, pretends he is asleep. She calls again:) Mike, do you hear me? (He still pretends sleep; She shakes him.)

Mr F (cries out) Ouch, me foot. Where's your brains, woman?

Mrs F Where I can't sit on it, like you're doing. (She pours medicine into spoon) Come on now, take it.

Mr F For the love o' me I'll never understand how a tea spoon full of that foul smelling stuff ,going into my stomach, will ver do my foot any good.

Mrs F (impatiently) I suppose now you'll be wanting to teach the doctor his business.

Mr F (sarcastically) Oh, no, he knows his business. I don't have to teach him. The way he can get money out o' you--- Gee, I wish he'd give me a few lessons.

Mrs F If you don't shut your mouth and take the medicine I'll give you a lesson you'll never forget.

Mr F (laughs) All right, I'll shut me mouth. (He closes his lips tightly)

Mrs F (shouts in anger) Open your mouth, open it quick, before it goes down through your collar band.

Mr F It'll do as much good there, as it will in me stomach.

Mrs F (anger increasing) My hand's getting paralyzed. Are you goin' to take it, or ain't ye?

Mr F (in tone of disgust) I suppose I'll have to. Where is the water?

(Enter Elisabeth, called Lizz for short)

Mrs F Bring a little water, will you, Lizz.

Liz (as she goes to door) He thought it was all right for Margy and me to take any kind of medicine, when we were kids.

Mr F (calls after her) I think it's all right now. ---Here, you can take this.

Liz (looks at her Dad) You're too generous.

Mrs F Hurry up, Liz, me hands losin' life.

(Liz leaves, returns in a moment with glass of water. Hands it to her father.)

Liz My advise is: take it quick. There's a funny look on mother's face.

Mr F (looks at his wife) I'm thinkin' yer right.

(He opens his mouth. Mrs F. pours medicine into it.)

Mr F (as he shakes his head in disgust) If you had to take a tea spoon o' that stuff yerself you'd get your feet cut off before you'd take another.

Liz Too bad about you. She's taking worse medicine than you, when she's running the house on what she's getting now.

Mr F You've got the finest way o' straightening things out, Liz. You're a wonder, you are.

Mrs F (as she goes to the door) She's telling the truth, ain't she?

3 11
Mr F Yes; but who asked her?

Mrs F Stop yer bickering now. --Liz, start setting the table.
(Mrs F. leaves. Liz goes to buffet, takes out white table cloth, goes to table, takes up vase with flowers, smells them.)

Liz They smell lovely, but not half their money's worth. (She looks over at father) Dad, if you knew what I paid ~~XXXX~~ for these flowers----

Mr F I don't want to know; I'm miserable enough.

Liz Let's see if you can make a guess at it.

Mr F I'll bet they cost you a dollar.

Liz (in shocked tone) A dollar for a bouquet like this on Mother's Day? Three dollars would only come near it.

Mr F (in shocked tone) You mean to tell me you spent three dollars for a bunch o' stink weeds?

(Enter Mrs F.)

Mrs F Are you two at it again?

Liz Did you hear what he called those flowers?

Mrs F Never mind what he called them. I think they are beautiful, and they're mine, ain't they?

Mr F If you knew what they cost you'd take a hemorrhage. She could almost have gotten you a pair o' shoes for the money; but what's the use o' trying to tell you anything. You're always for your daughters; I ain't nothing around here.

Mrs F Glory be ter God! I been wishin' you'd be something ever since the day I married yew.

Liz (sarcastically) Ain't married life grand!

Mr F (shouts) And if it ain't grand, whose fault is it? Me and yer mother got along all right till you two grew up and decided we den't know nothin'. She (he points to his wife

Well, you got her so bull-dosed, I think she's believing it. She even believes in Mother's Day.

Mrs F I can see you ~~spn't~~.

Mr F Of course I don't; but if it was anything like it ought to be, I would.

Liz (with a toss of her head) Maybe you'd tell us what it ought to be.

Mr F Sure I will. First, I think it ought to be Mother's Day Three Hundred and Sixty Five days out o' the year, and a day more in Leap Year. Second, if they ^{had} had to make it a law to get the kids to be nice to their mother one day out o' the year, Why the hell didn't the law tell them how to be nice to her?

Mrs F Ain't it nice enough for children to spend the whole day with their mothers and bring them flowers?

Mr F Sure. They come and spend the day eatin', and you spend the day cooking. You've been in that kitchen since seven o'clock this morning. Margy likes this, and Liz likes this.-----

(Auto is heard stopping at door. Liz runs over to window.)

Liz Here's Margy now. (Mrs F's face brightens;]

Mr F Tickled pink, ain't you, because she's bringing in a little bouquet, and a big appetite.

Mrs F You ain't glad to see her, I suppose?

Mr F Sure I am; but I don't act foolish over them, like you do.

Mrs F You swiped many a nickel from me and gave it to them.

Mr F If it was only nickels you swiped from me to give to them, I wouldn't be sitting here waiting for them to give me something now.

(Enter Margy. She throws her arms around her mother's neck and kisses her; then runs over to Dad and embraces him. He hugs her tightly. She then goes over and kisses her sister.)

Margy (turns to Dad) How's the foot,Dad?
 Mr F Its a lot better since you were here. (Margy places small box, she was carrying, on table.)
 Liz Well, if it did'nt get better in that length o' time----
 Mr F (laughs) It's a sure bet Liz don't miss any tricks.
 Mrs F (sniffs) The beans. (She runs out)
 Margy (removing coat, hat and gloves) She's right, Dad, it's two weeks since I been here; but, honestly, it's terrible the way things go on in the suburbs. You buy a house to live in, and you don't live in it at all. You keep going from one neighbor to another. Poker and Bridge, ad Bridge and Poker.
 Liz But when you first moved out there and nobody give you a tumble we were good enough for you, were'nt we?
 Mrs F (entering) Now, Liz, Margy did'nt come here for a lecture.
 Margy To tel the truth, mother, that's one os the reasons why I dont come as often as I should.
 Liz What do you expect? A brass band to come to meet you? Being Mrs Robertson might mean a whole lot to you, but to us it's a calamity.
 Margy (grabs her hat and coat) I won't stand for this another minute. (She puts on her hat. Mrs F goes over to her.)
 Mrs F Don't be a fool, Margy. I've got such a nice dinner waiting for you; and you know, she does'nt mean a thing she says. She's just like your father.
 Mr F (shouts) Hey there, leave me out o' this. I been bustin' with ambition to say something here, but, being it's Mother's Day I--I--well, kept me mouth shut for peace sake.
 Margy She would'nt care if it was God's Day. If she's got anything to say, she'll say it, like all old maids do.

Liz (goes over to her mother with a look of determination- -- Mother, if you know your girl like I think you do you better send her on her way, or I'll send her flying out o' that window.

Margy She don't have to send me. I'll go. I'll come some morning when she's to work.

Mr F That's what you get for your bakin' and cookin' since seven o'clock this morning for your angels.

Mrs F (begins to cry) He's right. I put my whole life into you girls. I gave you everything. I kept nothing for myself but my troubles--(she sniffels) but I always lived in the hope when you're grown up, then things would be different

Mr F Well, ain't they? You laughed once in a while when they were kids, now, they're big,--you're cryin'.

Mrs F (sniffels) He's right, he's right.
(Liz looks first at mother, then at Dad for a moment, then goes over to Marge, grabs her hat off her head and throws it on a chair.)

Liz Don't cry, Mom, I didn't mean----It's just that I'm sore the way that little snip treats me.--Now you sit right down here. (She places a chair near her father)---We'll get the dinner on the table, and all you get to do now is to come to the table to eat it. How's that?

Mrs F (smiling to husband) You see, they're all right.

Mr F Yes, for as long as it will last.

Liz (to Margyx) Come on now, this is a fifty fifty proposition.

Margy (throws down coat) All right. Wait a minute. I brought a little present for Ma,--something useful. (She opens box, takes out pocket book, hands it to mother)

Mrs F This is lovely, ain't it, Liz?

Liz Yes, but if she gave you the money she paid for it you'd have something to put in your old pocket book. Now you've got two o' them with nothing to put in either o' them.

Margy How about the money you spent on the flowers?

Mr F They're off again.

Liz I deprive myself to buy her something once in a while, and I wanted her to have a few flowers on Mother's day.

Mr F (sniffs) I smell something burning again.

Mrs F (sniffs; as she starts for kitchen door) My God, I hope it ain't-----

Liz Now, you stay right here. (She turns to Margy) Come on, angel face. (She goes out. Margy goes to door.)

(Mrs F calls Margy to her; she tip-toes over)

Mrs F Is your husband coming?

Margy (ill at ease) I think-- yes-- I guess-- He'll --he'll be here. (She leaves.)

Mr F Mary, I got a faint suspicion he ain't comin'.

Mrs F You're always suspicious o' somethin'. You know she wouldn't let him get away with that. It would be an insult to her family.

Mr F I'll bet he thinks we would trip over an insult and wouldn't recognise it.

Mrs F (draws a deep breath) If I ever hear you say somebody is doin' something right I'll die of the shock.

Mr F If you ever let me say something without findin' fault with me I'll die of shock.

Mrs F (in impatient tone) Will you stop arguing with me?

Mr F I ain't arguing; I'm just tellin' you something.

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Mrs F

Well, stop tellin' me, or I'll jump out o' me skin.

Mr F

There it is . It's me, always me. You let your daughters walk all over you, but when it comes to me,--I can't open my mouth.

Mrs F

(beside herself with anger) You can't open your mouth? If you ever shut it for ten minutes I'll know it's time to send for the priest.

Mr F

What are you gettin' so worked up about? I'm only telling you the truth.

Mrs F

Well, for the love o' Mike, tell me a couple o' lies, if it will help to mend things instead o' bustin' them up.

Mr F

If you had any sense you'd see I'm just preparin' you-----

Mrs F

(rises, all patience gone) Mike, if you don't quit-- as sure as the Lord made you, I'll prepare ye for your funeral. There's been ^{peace} ~~now~~ here for a little while. You're goin' let me enjoy it-----

(At that moment the sound of throwing pots and pans and dishes are heard from the kitchen.)

Liz

(heard calling from kitchen) You dirty little shriveled-up weasel. I'll show you what a hash-slinger can do.

(Mr and Mrs F gaze at each other. Door opens. Margy comes rushing in, hair disheveled, dress spotted with gravy. As she comes through door a plate comes flying after her. She runs to her mother's arms for protection.)

Mrs F

What happened now?

Margy

I--I---

(Liz comes bounding in, bungalow apron open, flying to one side, stockings grease marked, her long hair half down.)

- Mrs F Liz, I think you're goin' crazy.
- Liz I think I am too, if I let her get away without killing her.
- Mr F What'd she do?
- Liz (panting) Do? She didn't do anythingbut stands looking at me, putting on airs, and telling me the colors and styles of her dresses, just to get my goat. Then she goes to mybed-room to powder her pug nose. When she gets back I'm strainin' the soup, and it splashed. She got a little bit of it onher dress, and, holy smoke, you should have seen her.--She nearly hit the ceiling. She begins calling me all sorts o' names, and I don't say a word----
- (Mr F laughs out loud.)
- Mrs F What are ye laughin' at?
- Mr F (still laughing) Liz didn't say a word. (He laughs again;)
- Liz Well, I didn't, because I was a little bit sorry for the dress; but when she called me a hash slinger, she went the limit. She knows darn well it's the only kind of a job that'll pay me enough to run this shebang.--(She is about to spring at her again) The damn little----
- Mrs F (holds Margy protectingly) You shouldn't have said that, Margy.
- Margy (whimpering) I--I--know I should'nt, but Mom, my brand new dress. I--I got so upset, I--I just lost myself.
- Mrs F But you're sorry, ain't you?
- Margy Yes, I'm sorry I said that, and more sorry it had to happen on Mother's Day.
- Mrs F Did you hear that, Liz?
- Liz Yes, I heard, and if it was'nt for Mother's Day her being sorry wouldn't help her any. She'd go home to her husband

40
on a stretcher.

Mrs F Then I am thankin' God it is Mother's Day. Maybe now we'll eat our dinner in peace. (She goes over to buffet, takes out napkin and wipes Margy's dress.)

Mr F You'd better hurry and get it on the table before it starts again.

Mrs F When God made you He must've thought He was makin' a ~~gon~~key. (Mrs F is about to take silver from drawer, Margy gets there ahead of her.)

Margy You sit down, mother, I'll set the table. (Mrs F sits down. Margy removes flowers from table, places them on buffet, then lays the cloth. Mr F tries to change his position in the chair.)

Mr F (cries out) Ouch, ouch. (Mrs F runs over to help him, touches his foot, he yells:) Holy mackerel, are ye tryin' to kill me? (Margy goes over, tries to help, he screams:) You're turnin' it the wrong way. For God's sake let go o' me foot.

(Liz rushes in, pot of potatoes in hand. Drops it in her excitement. Runs over to father.)

Liz (pushes mother and Margy aside) Get away. I know how to fix him. (She gets down on her knees, turns foot gently. Mr F breathes a sigh of relief.) You had his foot to one side. That was it.

Mr F For God's sake, Liz, don't ever die and leave me with this foot.

Mrs F picks pot and potatoes from floor. Margy takes silver from drawer, places it on table. Liz takes pot from mother and leaves.

Mrs F That feet don't seem to be getting much better.
Margy I think you ought to change to another doctor.
Mr F I think you're thinkin' right; but try and convince your mother.
(Margy goes to kitchen, returns in a moment with four dinner plates; places them. Enter Liz.
Liz Well, everything is ready now; but where's The Husband
(She looks at Margy out of the corner of her eye.)
Margy (timidly) Don't--don't let's wait for him. Maybe--maybe he won't come at all.
(Liz looks at her mother, Dad looks at Liz.)
Liz Did you hear that, mother? Maybe he won't come at all.
(She looks at table, sees only four places set.) Maybe? The little liar. She knows he ain't coming; she only set the table for four.
Margy Well, I could'nt make him come if he did'nt want to.
Mrs F Of course she could'nt, Liz. Now, don't get into another argument over that. We're all hungry, let's have our dinner, and let's have it in peace. Come on, we'll move the table over to your Dad.
(They all help carry table over to Mr F. Liz goes to kitchen door, looks back at Margy in disgust.)
Liz come on in and get the celery and the bread. (Margy follows Liz to kitchen.)
Mr F The dirty son of a gun. If I can ever get out o' this chair
(Enter Margy with celery and bread, places them on table. Mrs F places the chairs. Enter Liz, carrying two plates of soup.)

Margy I'll get the other two.

Liz (in commanding tone) Sit down. (She goes out again)

Mrs F I suppose it's a long time since you had ex-tail soup?
(Enter Liz with the other two plates)

Margy I never make it . It's too much trouble.

Mrs F Yes, I know. That's why I made it. I knew you'll like it.
(Liz sits down, misses flowers, rises abruptly, takes flowers from buffet and puts them on table with a bang. They all startle.)

Mr F (as he takes first spoonful of soup) I wish the Law would make a Husband's Day; maybe I'd get the soup I like once.
(Margy looks at her wrist-watch, then puts it to her ear. Liz watches her)

Mrs F If they ever made a wife's day I'd want something better than that.

Mr F What would you want? (Margy is getting nervous.)

Mrs F I'd want some one to chloroform you for the day.

Mr F Well-----

Margy (interrupts) My watch must be fast, Dad. What time have you got?

Mr F (takes large silver watch from pocket) It's ten minutes to four.

Margy (in tone of distress) I--I--can't stay another minute. I'm half an hour late now.

Mr F What do you mean: you're half an hour late? We thought you were goin' to spend the day with us.

Margy I can't, Dad. I wish I could.

Mrs F Why can't ye? Your husband's got no mother. If he had there
 would be some excuse, but----

Liz He's just tryin' to show us he is the boss; but he's going
to get left.

Margy (rises) He ain't, because I promised to pick him up at the bridge, and I'm going to do it. It ain't his fault that your two o'clock dinner is served at four.

Liz (in determined tone) Sit down, while the sitting's good.

Margy Look here now; I ain't goin' to take another bit o' your
guff. You don't like my husband, because he ain't your kind.

Liz (a look of "you'll get yours,lady" is depicted on her face) Just what do you mean by "he ain't your kind"?

Margy I don't have to tell you that. You know it yourself.

Mr F You said enough, Margy----

Margy Sure you'll defend her, because she gives you more'n I do.
I get an allowance just for my table. What do you think I
can spare out o' that?

14x Nothing, because I can imagine what that piker would give
 you; but the hell wants somethin' coming from that little
 runt?

Margy (becoming furious) You---you---- (She grabs flowers upsetting vase. Water spills all over table and floor. She strikes Liz over head with flowers. Liz, in an attempt to use her fist on Margy, pushes table. It touches Mr F's feet. He begins to yell. Mrs F tries to move table, but moves it the wrong way. Mr F yells louder than before. Margy runs to door, Liz after her, but Margy gets out in time. Liz sees Margy's coat, hat and gloves on chair. She opens window and throws them out one by one. Mr F

(Mr F is still yelling, while Mrs F is trying to help him.

Mr F

Ouch, murder, help, me foot.

(Liz, panting for breath, goes over to her Dad, gets down on her knees, puts foot in comfortable position. He heaves a sigh of relief. Liz slips down to floor in a sitting position, drawing a deep breath of exhaustion. Mrs F drops into a chair in an attitude of complete "well, I give up"

Curtain.